

LOUDON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION

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Received & Inspected
JUN 21 2016
FCC Mailroom

June 17, 2016

Marlene H. Dortch

Secretary

Federal Communications Commission

445 12th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20554

DOCKET FILE COPY ORIGINAL

RE: Request for Review and/or Waiver by Sweetwater City Schools et al. of Funding Decisions by the Universal Service Administrative Company, Docket No. 02-6

Dear Ms. Dortch:

As Superintendent of Loudon County Schools, I write to address the consequences to my students of the process by which E-rate funding has been denied to my district. My district is a member of the Sweetwater Consortium, which was denied funding by USAC. We request immediate action by the Commission to provide the funding to which our district is entitled under the rules of the E-rate program. We know that you appreciate that budgets are always tight, and we hope that you know how much we appreciate the E-rate program and how much it has improved the teaching and learning experience.

Since 2013, our district has been purchasing services from ENA, which has consistently proven the validity of the scoring process by providing our schools continuous, reliable, cost-effective services. If funding is denied by the Commission, we want you to appreciate the significant harm that decision will cause. While our broadband connectivity is now a critical element of the teaching and learning experiences, it competes for funding with salaries for our teachers, capital improvements for our aging infrastructure and other programs. Every day that passes without a final resolution creates increasing pressure on our budget.

Already in our district, we have made significant cuts to our budgets. For example, we have had to forego much needed raises to teacher and staff members, reduce the number of staff that is required at each school, and limit textbook expenditures. We cannot bear additional loss of funds. Because our budgeting counted on E-rate reimbursement, we have accrued over the past three years a debt to ENA in an amount that exceeds \$1,000,000. If we are required to pay from school funds the amount owed to ENA, we will have to:

- Cut 10 or more staff positions
- Cut 8 - 10 teaching positions
- Defer maintenance on roof repairs across the county
- Reduce future technology expenditures to a bare minimum

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As you can readily see, the unexpected loss of funding as a result of a decision made three years after the procurement will be devastating to our children. As the damage suffered by a student in one year reverberates in future years, our students will suffer lasting harm. This procurement has fully achieved the Commission's goals for this program; we ask that you act quickly to avoid the dramatic damage that will result if the program is not funded. Even if the Commission acts to correct USAC's mistake six months or a year from now, we cannot replace the educational services that will be eliminated in the meantime – that time for that child is lost forever. Accordingly, we ask that the Commission act immediately to grant our appeal and direct USAC to provide funding to our district. Please let me know if I can provide additional information.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jason Vance".

Jason Vance
Superintendent of Schools
Loudon County Board of Education